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Use of generative AI in news production in Türkiye: 'A threat or an opportunity?'

Türkiye'de haber üretiminde üretken yapay zekâ kullanımı: 'Tehdit mi yoksa fırsat mı?'

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Abstract This article examines journalists' perspectives on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in their journalism practices in Türkiye. This study analyzes the integration of Generative Artificial Intelligence tools in Turkish newsrooms, explores journalists' attitudes toward these technologies, and investigates the ethical dilemmas and their impact on journalism practices and the news production process. Data from in-depth interviews with 26 journalists from various media organizations in Türkiye were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that although Generative Artificial Intelligence tools save considerable time on journalism tasks such as translation, summarization, and fact-checking, they have not significantly reduced journalists' overall workload. Additionally, the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence tools in reporting on sensitive, complex issues (e.g. foreign news, women's and children's rights) raises serious ethical concerns, particularly regarding bias in news coverage. It also seems that Generative Artificial Intelligence tools are failing to replace the essential human qualities of emotion, empathy, and contextual understanding that journalists bring to their work. Finally, the Integration of Generative Artificial Intelligence into journalism is viewed both as an opportunity and a threat to various journalistic roles, such as online journalism and editing, yet it is perceived as inevitable in the journalism profession, much like in many other fields.

Öz Bu makale, Türkiye'de gazetecilerin gazetecilik uygulamalarında üretken Yapay Zeka kullanımına ilişkin bakış açılarını incelemektedir. Araştırma, Türkiye'deki haber odalarında üretken Yapay Zeka araçlarının entegrasyonunu analiz etmeyi, gazetecilerin bu teknolojilere yönelik tutumlarını keşfetmeyi ve gazetecilik uygulamaları ile haber üretim sürecindeki etik ikilemleri ve etkileri incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada, Türkiye'deki çeşitli medya kuruluşlarından 26 gazeteci ile yapılan derinlemesine görüşmelerden elde edilen veriler tematik analiz yöntemiyle incelenmiştir. Araştırma bulgularına göre, üretken Yapay Zeka araçları tercüme, özetleme ve teyit gibi gazetecilik pratiklerinde önemli ölçüde zaman tasarrufu sağlasa da, gazetecilerin genel iş yüklerinde anlamlı bir azalma yaşanmamıştır. Ayrıca, üretke Yapay Zeka araçlarının duyarlı ve karmaşık konularda (örneğin, dış haberler, kadın ve çocuk hakları gibi) haber raporlama süreçlerinde kullanılması, özellikle haber kapsamındaki önyargılarla ilgili ciddi etik sorunlar ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Ayrıca, üretken Yapay Zeka araçlarının gazetecilerin işine kattığı duygu, empati ve bağlamı anlama gibi temel insan niteliklerini yerine getirmede yetersiz kaldığı görülmektedir. Sonuç olarak, üretken Yapay Zeka'nın gazeteciliğe entegrasyonu, hem bir fırsat hem de internet gazeteciliği, editör gibi çeşitli gazetecilik rollerinde bir tehdit olarak görülmekle birlikte, diğer birçok meslek gibi gazetecilik mesleğinde de kaçınılmaz olarak algılanmaktadır.

Keywords Artificial intelligence · generative artificial intelligence tools · journalism · newsrooms · news production

Anahtar Kelimeler Yapay zekâ · üretken yapay zekâ araçları · gazetecilik · haber odaları · haber üretimi

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Yazar Notu Bu çalışma, 11-13 Aralık 2024 tarihlerinde Bologna Üniversitesi'nde düzenlenen Workshop AI, Politics, and Societies etkinliğinde, "Use of Generative AI in News Production in Turkey" başlığıyla sunulmuştur

Use of generative AI in news production in Türkiye: 'A threat or an opportunity?'

Can machines truly replace the human touch in journalism, or will they merely reshape the profession in ways we have not yet imagined? Beckett (2019, p.1) argued that while robots will not take over journalism, machines will soon handle much of the routine work. This view aligns with the "global hype" (Erdoğan, 2024, p.1) triggered by the release of OpenAI's *ChatGPT* in 2022, moving beyond the paranoia and exaggerated expectations to analyze the technology's implications for the journalism profession and its potential impacts.

The fact that many tasks traditionally performed manually by journalists in newsrooms—such as text translation, visual design, and data analysis—are now being performed out through generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools, along with the rise of data journalism and robot journalism, has led to the emergence of extensive and diverse research. Many studies have focused on how journalists and media organizations perceive GenAI technologies, the extent to which they benefit from these tools, and the role GenAI plays in newsroom workflows (Moran & Shaikh, 2022; Kothari & Cruikshank, 2022; Stray, 2019; Yu & Huang, 2021). Moreover, many newsrooms have issued GenAI guidelines emphasizing ethical use, such as Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in Media by *Anadolu Agency* (n.d); Guidance: The Use of Artificial Intelligence by the *BBC* (2024); and How *The New York Times* Uses A.I. for Journalism by *The New York Times (2024)*.

Schiffrin (2024) emphasized that without informed and independent journalism on AI, there will be major gaps in transparency and accountability, both within media organizations and society at large. In this context, this study addresses that gap by examining Turkish journalists' knowledge, usage practices, and attitudes toward GenAI. It not only maps the current state of technological adaptation but also offers insights for future professional development. As a result, the study contributes original, context-specific knowledge to a limited but emerging body of literature.

Review of journalism and AI literature

Prior to widespread use of GenAI, various forms of AI were employed for online news production, as well as for the creation and distribution of information. Although automation has been utilized by larger newsrooms to streamline news production and other routine tasks, it has been less common in local or smaller newsrooms. However, with the advent of GenAI, this trend is shifting.

To better understand the technological foundations of this shift, it is useful to first define what constitutes artificial intelligence and, more specifically, GenAI. Broussard et al. (2019) defined AI as a subbranch of machine learning that simulates human intelligence and learns from data to make inferences without human intervention (p.1). Simon (2024) in *Definition of AI*, defines AI as "the act of computationally simulating human activities and skills in narrowly defined domains, typically the application of machine learning approaches through which machines learn from data and/or their own performance." As a sub-field of machine learning, GenAI involves generating "new content, such as text, images, music and other content based on input" (Pavlik, 2023, p. 86).

Chan-Olmsted (2019), in the study examining the adaptation process of AI in the media industry and stated that eight main areas have emerged in the use of AI tools in the media. These main areas include

audience content recommendations/discovery, audience engagement, augmented audience experience, message optimization, content management, content creation, audience insights, and operational automation (Chan-Olmsted, 2019, p.193). In the context of journalism practices, Türksoy (2022) suggested that AI applications have the potential to transform five key areas: (i) reaching facts quickly, (ii) writing news quickly, (iii) providing trustworthy, accurate, and objective information, (iv) writing news with fewer errors, and (v) spreading fake news online (p. 402).

Many studies have emphasized that GenAI tools are transforming journalism practices; however, it is also widely discussed that while, GenAI offers significant advantages and conveniences to journalists, it also brings certain disadvantages and risks. Beckett (2019) found that the three key motives for using GenAI in the newsrooms were to make journalists' work more efficient, with 68% of responses indicating this, to deliver more relevant content to users, as stated by 45% of the responses, and to improve business efficiency highlighted by 18% of the responses (p.7). According to the Knight Foundation, the purposes of using GenAI tools in journalism are as follows: 47% for augmenting reporting capacity, 27% for reducing variable costs, 12% for optimizing revenue, 5% for engagement, 5% for self-critique, and 3% for news reporting (Keefe et al., 2021).

Gutierrez-Lopez et al. (2022, p. 1) found that journalists are generally open to AI technologies that are beneficial for their work. Similarly, The Associate Press report, conducted by Rinehart and Kung (2022) examined the use of GenAI tools in local newsrooms across the United State. The findings revealed that journalists found AI-driven automation particularly beneficial during the newsgathering process. Some key applications they highlighted include: (i) Transcribing interviews conducted in multiple languages, including audio and video formats; (ii) Generating meaningful story recommendations for online audiences; (iii) Analyzing large datasets to support investigative journalism; (iv) Fact checking and identifying mis/disinformation (Rinehart & Kung, 2022, p.19).

While these studies point to the practical benefits of GenAI in journalism, other scholars have drawn attention to the ethical challenges and evolving professional responsibilities. Nishal and Diakopoulos (2023) found that GenAI tools help journalists summarize large, unstructured datasets, requiring careful prompt creation and human oversight to ensure accuracy. Dutkiewicz et al. (2025) outline the potential opportunities created by GenAI in the field of media content gathering and production as follows: (i) GenAI can help with gathering materials, scanning social media, recognizing gender and age in images, or categorizing articles by tags, topics, and keywords. (ii) It aids in identifying trends and enhancing stories by adding new perspectives, voices, and content. (iii) It can be used to generate photo, video, and text elements for news (pp. 284-285).

On the other hand, Renner (2017) discussed journalists' responsibilities following the introduction of GenAI in the newsroom, highlighting two major concerns: transparency and personalization. Transparency is a fundamental value and ethical principle of journalism. To strengthen public trust in the media, media organizations are embracing the ideal of transparency, and it has even been suggested that transparency could replace objectivity as the new form of journalism in the digital age (Chadha & Koliska, 2014, pp. 1-2). Personalization leads to problems in creating shared reality. Missaoui et al. (2019) found that journalists expressed concern that AI may hinder verification practices because of bias and non-transparency issues. In addition, Chan-Olmsted (2019) expressed "there are significant challenges in balancing the effectiveness and efficiency and human and AI judgement" (p. 193).

In addition to professional ethics, scholars have also raised structural concerns regarding the datasets and algorithms underlying GenAI systems. Another risk associated with AI is the lack of ethical review (Cheng, 2024, pp. 3-4). The language models of GenAI tools are built using millions of words extracted from publicly available sources such as websites and social media. These words reveal the biases of human authors that

AI systems can learn from and imitate. Böyük (2024) emphasized other threats of AI, such as "problems like jeopardizing the profession of journalism by replacing humans, data privacy and security risks, algorithmic biases and the de-objectification of the news attract attention" (p. 158). According to Beckett's (2019) report, journalists identified financial resources (27%) and knowledge/skills (24%) as the biggest challenges to adopting GenAI. Cultural resistance (24%), including fears of job loss and reluctance toward adopting new technologies, was also significant. Other challenges included a lack of GenAI knowledge (19%) and strategic insights (17%) within the organization, as well as the high cost of building and managing AI (Beckett, 2019, p.7).

Assessing the benefits and threats of GenAI tools in the Turkish media context, Etike (2023) stated that GenAI tools are used by journalists in a wide range of news production processes, from information gathering to writing and distribution (p. 424). Based on Kortak's (2023) research on the use of GenAI in newsrooms in Türkiye, machine learning and deep learning systems are prominent in newspapers. News agencies automatically categorize and summarize content, use applications to check word accuracy, convert audio to text, and widely apply smart translation, transcription, and image text detection, while television uses GenAI tools the least due to brief news images and limited editor involvement. On the other hand, GenAI tools are the most widely used tools in online journalism. In this field, *ChatGPT* is particularly used for news writing tasks, and while DALL-E is frequently preferred in text-based descriptions and visual creation processes (Kortak, 2023, pp. 255-257).

Uzunoğlu (2023), on the other hand, stated that "cautious optimism is essential" for GenAI in the newsroom because of concerns about the spread of misinformation, erosion of objectivity, and the displacement of journalists due to GenAI tools in Türkiye. In this context, Azimli (2022, p. 34) also argues in her study that journalists in Türkiye are reluctant to embrace automated journalism because, unlike machines, "an ideal human journalist observes, questions, researches, and archives; they are brave, transparent, conscientious, and curious." Building on this perspective, a recent study by Aydın and İnce (2024) found that GenAI-generated news reports often fail to follow the 5W1H rule. Böyük (2024) suggested that human supervision and regulation are necessary to ensure that GenAI-produced news complies with ethical standards. Thus, journalists' supervision and regulation help to protect ethical principles (Böyük, 2024, p.159).

As an attempt to address the above, this study aims to fill a significant gap in the existing literature by examining how the use of GenAI is perceived among journalists in Türkiye. This study distinguishes itself by adopting a qualitative approach that emphasizes journalists' individual experiences, shifting professional roles, and ethical concerns. By examining these issues, the study offers a deeper understanding of the local implications of GenAI while, also engaging with global debates about the future of journalism in the age of AI.

Aim and methodology

This section outlines the overall aim of the study and describes the methodological approach and research design adopted to achieve it.

Aim

This study aims to contribute to and expand the emerging body of literature by providing a more detailed and context-specific analysis. Although a limited number of studies have examined the use of GenAI in journalism within the context of Türkiye, this area of research remains largely underexplored. Given that the purpose of this study is to understand how GenAI is utilized in Turkish newsrooms and to explore journalists' perceptions of these technologies, the main question to be answered is: 'In what ways do journalists engage with and integrate GenAI tools within their news production practices, and how do these interactions shape their journalistic processes?' The secondary research questions are: 'What are journalists' perceptions

regarding the effective and reliable use of GenAI in journalistic practices?' and 'How do journalists envision the future role of GenAI in the newsroom?'

Research design and sampling

This article is based on a qualitative study employing thematic analysis to enhance understanding of how GenAI is adopted in various newsroom and journalism practices across Türkiye. Given the limited number of existing studies in Türkiye on the use of GenAI in journalism, the study is positioned as exploratory in nature.

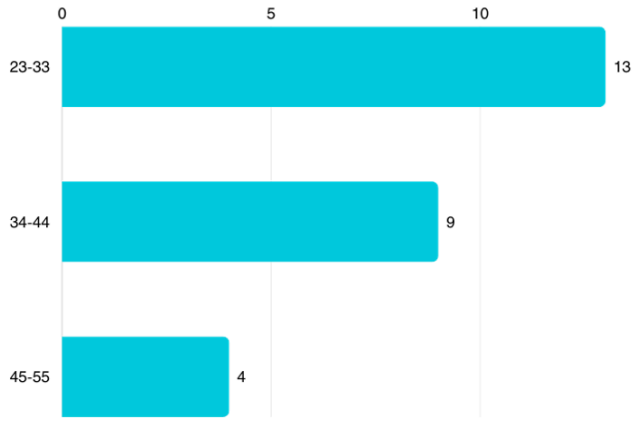
Approval was received from the ethics committee at İstanbul Nişantaşı University during its meeting on November 21, 2024, ethics committee meeting number SOSETKK2024-09. The data for this research emerged from semi-structured interviews with 26 journalists from various media organizations. After establishing contact with journalists using varied methods, including "snowball sampling" and contacts of contacts known as "gate-keepers" (Erdoğan & Uyan-Semerci, 2021), it was clarified whether they use GenAI and how frequently, and appointments were scheduled by determining suitable days and times.

Figure 1

Gender distribution

Figure 2

Age range



A purposive sampling method was employed to reach journalists who utilize GenAI within the research population. To diversify the sample's homogeneous structure, interviews were conducted with journalists whose professional roles, educational backgrounds, and experience levels vary across different platforms

of traditional and digital media. The sample included 10 women and 16 men, aged between 23 and 48, with professional experience ranging from 2 to 23 years. Among the respondents, various roles within the field of journalism were represented, including chief reporter, news anchor, news editor, news website manager, technology journalist, foreign news editor, visual director, web editor, correspondent, news producer, and reporter. The educational qualifications of the participants included bachelor's and master's degrees, with one individual holding an associate's degree. Experience in the field varies significantly, with some journalists having over 23 years of experience, and others being relatively new to the profession.

Figure 3
Education

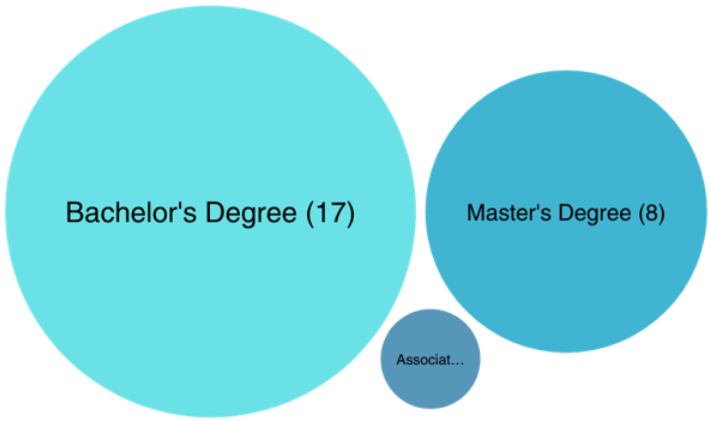
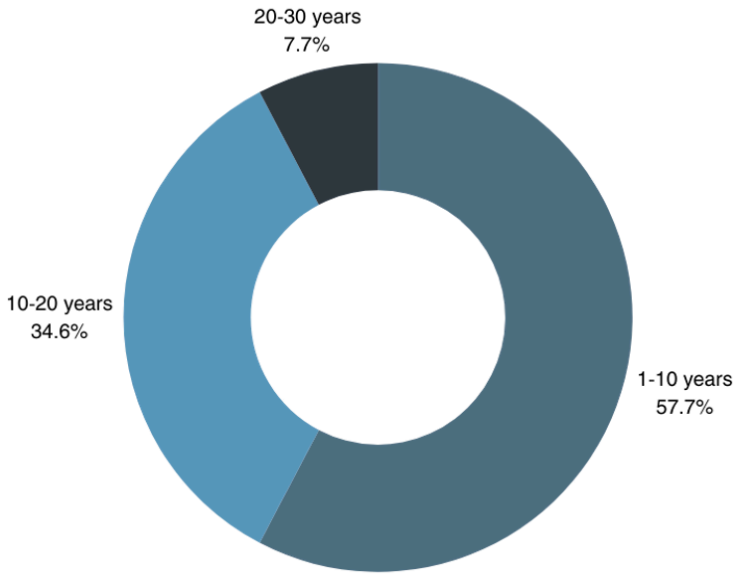


Figure 4
Experience



Interviews were conducted by both researchers, with a duration of 35 to 50 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded with participant consent and concluded with an open segment, allowing participants to add reflections or expand on earlier points. Although there are varying perspectives regarding sample size and

data saturation in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Mason, 2010; Morse, 1994; Small, 2009; Staller, 2021), it is generally emphasized that a consistent thematic framework (Erdoğan & Uyan-Semerci, 2021; Guest et al., 2006) should be presented through the interview guide. Hennink and Kaiser (as cited in Mwita, 2022) argue that saturation is often reached between the 9th and 17th interview, typically by the 13th interview. In another study examining 560 dissertations employing qualitative research methods, Mason (2010) found that the average sample size was 31, with the most common sample sizes being 20 and 30 (p. 10). Data collection ended upon reaching code and meaning saturation, as no new themes or codes emerged (Guest et al., 2013).

Data analysis

The interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis, as outlined by Saldaña (2021), by the researchers in order to discern recurring themes pertinent to the research question and the participants' experiences. All names have been anonymized through coding, and specific details, including the media organizations affiliated with the interviewers and the names of collaborating journalists, have been omitted to ensure that no respondent could be identified. Coding was conducted manually by two researchers using a consensus-based approach, following thematic refinement as outlined by (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 94). While offering valuable insights, this study is limited by its small, non-representative sample and reliance on self-reported narratives, which reflect subjective meaning-making rather than generalizable patterns.

Findings

The thematic analysis uncovered several important themes related to the impact of GenAI on journalism, focusing on time saved but workload unchanged when utilizing GenAI tools, ethical concerns surrounding the application of GenAI in reporting sensitive issues, the idea that AI can never replace the need for emotion and empathy in journalism, and the ongoing debate of whether GenAI represents a threat or an opportunity for the future of journalism.

Journalistic practices

The journalists who participated in this research reported varying degrees of engagement with GenAI tools in their professional routines. The tools are employed to support a range of journalistic tasks, including summarizing lengthy documents such as legal case files, translation, data visualization, proofreading for grammar and style, graphic design, the creation of infographics and news visuals, and background research related to news stories.

Various GenAI tools are utilized- such as *ChatGPT, DALL-E, MidJourney, Runway*, and *DeepL*, each serving distinct purposes within the news production process. The frequency and mode of use differ depending on the specific editorial context and the journalist's familiarity with the tool. Importantly, all participants underlined that content generated through GenAI is not directly incorporated into news texts without undergoing a verification process to ensure factual accuracy. The duration of GenAI usage among participants ranges from a maximum of approximately 1.5 years to a minimum of 5–6 months. This diversity in experience is further illustrated through individual accounts below.

While some participants reported an increase in their workload due to the necessity of verifying AI-generated content, others, such as P4, highlighted the timesaving and content-enriching potential of GenAI tools. P4, who mentioned that the Turkish media struggles to keep up with innovations, stated that journalists faced difficulties when transitioning from *WhatsApp* to *Telegram* in 2021 at their media organization. They added that now, with the use of GenAI, adapting to this new technology has become even more challenging, and the media is falling behind. P4 (age 40, News Editor) described the AI as a form of "consultant" that

enhances both efficiency and the quality of news content, adding that "essentially, the AI ends up writing about 20% to 30% of the news," particularly by offering more extensive information than they would have recalled on their own.

Another journalist, P3, with 15 years of experience, who began their career as a reporter and is currently working as a news anchor in television broadcasting, emphasizes that, similar to daily life and certain professions, technology has brought conveniences to journalism. However, they highlight that their workload has not decreased; rather, the number of tasks they undertake has increased.

> Journalists are referred to as 24/7 idea workers, and you realize this as you work. Even when you are not doing anything, you need to read. A two-hour gain is fantastic for me, but it does not decrease my workload. In fact, I can say that it increases my productivity. There is no reduction in workload, but an increase in productivity. [P3, age 34, News Anchor]

Participant 8, who has 9 years of experience, points out that while AI tools are expected to reduce the workload, in fact the workload remains the same, and the expectations of managers from journalists have increased. P8 explains that journalists, who complete routine tasks faster with AI tools, are now asked for more news:

> Rather than alleviating the workload, the workload has remained constant. Why? Because our managers are aware of the advantages that AI offer. For example, if users used to request one news article, now they are asking for two. This is because we filled this gap with another news piece. In a way, this is positive, as I can say that we have increased the time we dedicate to quality work by slightly alleviating the burden of tasks that could be considered menial. [P8, age 38, Reporter]

On the other hand, some participants pointed out that although AI tools are useful for tasks such as gathering information, summarizing legal documents, learning about inter-institutional agreements and the names of institutional employees, and translation in the news production process, they found themselves spending a considerable amount of time verifying the information obtained from AI. This finding is consistent with another study that found that journalists expressed concern that AI may hinder verification practices because of bias and non-transparency issues (Missaoui et al., 2019). Diakopoulos (2024) also emphasized the importance of reporters and editors possessing the necessary expertise to critically evaluate and detect inaccuracies in *ChatGPT*'s responses.

> There is an AI program, and certain things are expected from it. However, what is the most important thing for a journalist? It stands in front of news. Therefore, the text or tool you used must be accurate. It is important to stand up for that. In this regard, AI creates a potentially dangerous situation. Even if you use the paid version, I cannot accept that and trust AI to send it to the news desk. I need to verify the information; I need to read it thoroughly and ensure that everything is correct. [P7, age 30, Editor & Reporter]

In addition to efficiency gains, some participants reflected on the cognitive implications of relying on GenAI in journalistic tasks. P15, a web editor with approximately two years of experience using *ChatGPT* in sports journalism, described how the convenience offered by AI tools gradually undermined their capacity for critical thinking in journalistic practice:

> I needed to prepare six or seven interview questions very quickly. started using AI for that purpose. However, after a while, it created an incredible sense of laziness in me. I found myself not wanting to prepare anything on my own anymore, as I thought that I wouldn't even come up with ideas on my own. [P15, age 35, Web Editor]

These findings reveal that even within a relatively short adoption period, GenAI tools have begun to reshape journalistic practices in significant ways—affecting not only the efficiency of news production but also professional expectations, verification practices, and journalistic autonomy.

Ethical concerns

Ethical concerns, including hallucination, discriminatory or stereotypical language, hate speech, privacy risks, and the potential for ideologically biased content, emerged as prominent themes in participants' reflections on GenAI use in journalism.

The phenomenon of hallucination, which is described as the generation of incorrect information by AI, was another ethical issue highlighted by most participants. Cools and Diakopoulos (2024) similarly identified hallucination as a threat to use of GenAI tools as a misrepresentation of reality and the production of bias (p.12). It was noted that AI systems can sometimes result in unverified information, which can lead to serious problems in journalism. One of the journalists in this study mentioned their project of developing an AI tool for use in journalism and explained that they conducted ongoing testing and training processes to minimize such errors. P11, a manager working in digital and business transformation, emphasized that since AI systems rely on human data—shaped by political views and power structures—journalists must remain critically engaged and ensure human oversight. They also noted that in Türkiye, AI is not yet being used consciously, and this lack of an ethical framework increases the risk of disinformation.

> The primary objective should not be merely to automate tasks but, to ensure that the information produced is accurate and that journalistic practices remain sound, resulting in high-quality products. If this is not performed correctly, it can lead to hallucinations or disinformation, ultimately undermining the value of AI outputs. Therefore, establishing a proper framework for effective product development is essential. [P11, age 33, Manager (Digital Transformation and Business Transformation)]

Beckett (2024) acknowledged that AI-generated images used in news are more interesting than stock photos; however, he emphasized that the purpose of news visuals reflecting reality should always be to highlight their authenticity through truthfulness. A similar concern was raised by P10, who noted that "artificial intelligence is not applied to issues that require political stance" emphasizing the ethical boundaries of GenAI use in politically sensitive content. The views of another participant, P24, who uses AI tools in soft news, are as follows:

> News can be classified into two primary categories: hard news such as political news and soft news. In addition, news formats can be divided into video reports, photographic reports, and written articles. However, in certain situations, such as political news or interviews, we cannot use AI because we are interacting with a live subject. On the other hand, for topics that involve more abstract subjects, such as health news or food articles, AI can be beneficial. For example, when addressing issues related to marriages, we can create an image of a fighting couple. We can generate the desired visuals by using appropriate prompts. In soft news, in which there is no direct subject, this kind of imagery is particularly useful for addressing more abstract topics. For instance, when writing a parenting column, I can generate an image of a child using a tablet. All these topics generally encompass a broader audience, such as families and parents, thus, visuals produced by AI can be easily used. [P24, age 42, News Chief]

Some participants mentioned that they turned to GenAI to obtain information and generate text on various topics because they wanted to see what kind of content was produced based on human data. Emphasizing the importance of continuity, P14 expressed the necessity of tracking how much they have improved and how consistent their texts have become by experimenting with different prompts given to the AI as follows:

> I use it for everything because I need to assess information. I want to be able to evaluate whether a statement is incorrect or different and decide if it does not align with my perspective. I always want to see the results produced, as I am curious about their consistency. I wonder how consistent it can be. We can identify areas where consistency is lacking, and by continuously using it, we can observe the progression of its outputs. I feel the need to take advantage of GenAI in every context and to observe how it evolves and improves over time. [P14, age 44, News Website Manager]

Journalism is a profession grounded in the dissemination of news that is based on accurate and reliable sources. Journalists are expected to engage in rigorous confirmation and verification processes to uphold both their personal reputation and the credibility of the media organization represented. As Beckett (2024) emphasized, one of the major risks associated with the integration of AI into news production is the question of accountability—specifically, "who will take responsibility if there is a mistake?" He suggested that journalists should maintain control over the entire process, consult multiple sources, and carefully evaluate AI-generated outputs. In line with this view, rather than attributing the mistake to the AI system, P5 took full responsibility, and reinforced the importance of human agency and editorial integrity in AI-assisted journalism.

> In the context of an article, I engaged in a polemic with another writer. There is a section discussing a poem by Nazım Hikmet, specifically the period in which it was written and its content. I used AI to gather information about that poem and its context. Later, I input that information into my computer to rephrase it. However, I realized that the section I obtained was related to a different poem, not the one being discussed, and it was not directly relevant to the topic. A friend pointed this out to me, and I felt quite uncomfortable about it. [...] Therefore, after the article was published, I had to find a solution. The solution was to explain the situation and acknowledge that the information was incorrect, admitting my mistake. I did not say that the AI was wrong; I took responsibility for the error myself. [P5, age 46, News Editor]

These findings demonstrate that, despite the integration of GenAI tools into journalistic workflows, foundational ethical principles—such as accuracy, accountability, and editorial autonomy—continue to guide journalists' decision-making processes. The persistence of these values indicates that technological advancement does not necessarily displace professional norms but, rather reconfigures how they are enacted.

The need for emotion and empathy

Participants consistently emphasized that AI should be regarded as a supportive tool rather than a replacement, and that the human elements of journalism, such as emotional sensitivity, ethical reasoning, and contextual judgment, remain irreplaceable. As P8 noted, the distinction between a journalist writing news and having AI generate content is analogous to the difference between being informed and possessing informed judgment. This observation draws attention to the interpretive and epistemic dimensions of journalistic labor, which cannot be easily replicated by automated systems.

Another prominent theme in the findings is the limited capacity of AI tools to detect emotional nuances and contextual depths. Participant 1, a chief reporter with 11 years of experience, emphasized that AI tools are not successful in reflecting the emotional and subtextual nuances that journalists capture with their insights. While journalists have the professional skill to convey human emotions, sensitivity, and nuances according to the context of the story, machine-generated news lacks this skill.

> We are essentially storytelling. Journalists, reporters, narrators, and broadcasters are all involved. You are conveying what is happening and are broadcasting it. For instance, I have a text in front of me: President Erdoğan held an interview with journalists on a plane during his visits to Saudi Arabia and Azerbaijan. This sentence could have been prepared by AI. However, we must understand whether President Erdoğan was tense, cheerful, angry, calm, sad, or frustrated during these interactions. AI cannot perceive these nuances.
>
> For example, when covering a funeral, AI might simply report that a woman cried. However, it could determine whether she was crying out of joy, sadness, or pride. It only states that a woman cried. If this is a martyr's funeral, perhaps the father cried out of pride, the mother cried out sadness, or the mother cried because her child was orphaned. Understanding these emotions and nuances is related to being present and aware of the situation. AI can only tell us that a woman cried at the funeral, without providing any deeper context. [P1, age 32, Chief Reporter]

P6, a technology journalist and editor, echoed this view, asserting that current AI models are incapable of replacing human journalists, especially in terms of capturing emotional depth. While he acknowledges the

theoretical possibility of human-like AI in the distant future, he concluded that for now, "if we are talking about current models, then no" replacement is possible.

> The idea of replacing humans is a broad concept; it raises questions about how we define and measure human being. However, in one way or another, humanity will eventually create human-like AI. But that seems like a more distant future for me. [P6, age 42, Technology Journalist, Editor & Writer]

In Türkiye, a country frequently affected by earthquakes, crisis journalism is of fundamental importance. In such situations, it becomes a critical necessity to provide the public verified news from primary sources. P21, a news producer with four years of experience, highlighted the risks of relying on *ChatGPT* during crises, such as earthquakes. They stressed that the inability of AI to access primary sources compromises news quality and damages institutional credibility. As they noted:

> I assume there has been an earthquake. The earthquake occurred in a village near Elazığ. In that village, another news channel may have a reporter who can obtain or relay information. Since we do not have a news source here, there would be a significant difference between writing news by gathering information from *ChatGPT* or AI and writing news based on information obtained directly from the source. This will certainly be taken into account by the audience consuming the news and will affect the quality of the news. At the same time, it reflects the quality of the channel. This will inevitably lead to problems. For example, if a journalist uses *ChatGPT*, and the information they obtain turns out to be incorrect or unverified, such situations will damage both the media organization's and the journalist's credibility. [P21, age 29, News Producer]

These findings point to a core limitation in the journalistic application of generative AI; namely, its inability to approximate the human capacities for emotional discernment, contextual sensitivity, and empathetic responsiveness. While such qualities may often be taken for granted in routine newswork, they remain foundational to practices of meaning-making, credibility-building, and public trust in journalism.

AI in the future of journalism

This section explores journalists' perceptions of the future role of GenAI as both a source of innovation and a potential disruption. Most participants indicated that they believe GenAI can enhance the productivity and quality of news production in journalism in the future. However, many were skeptical about its immediate influence on changing news consumption habits in Türkiye. Consequently, the participants highlighted the need for major media organizations to adapt and implement concrete actions, such as providing in-service training for journalists, to prepare for a more AI-integrated future. It is most likely to take a longer time to integrate the use of GenAI into the curriculum for journalism students, as this requires structural changes. These include designing course content that connects with other courses, finding qualified instructors, and ensuring that current faculty members engage in specialized in training and research on GenAI technologies while also becoming users themselves.

One technology journalist and editor, P6, described the current attitude toward GenAI by noting that they were eager to use it, but also remained reserved. This ambivalence was echoed by another participant, P11, who pointed out that news consumption habits in Türkiye are largely shaped by sensationalism, where emotionally provocative content tends to overshadow factual accuracy. While P11 suggested that GenAI could assist in generating more neutral summaries of news events, this approach might not resonate with the Turkish audience, given the dominance of emotionally charged and attention-driven news culture.

> News habits in Türkiye are generally based on sensationalism. For example, an incident in Gaza may be reported differently by various international news agencies. Organizations like the *BBC, Anadolu Agency, Washington Post*, and *South China Morning Post* present the same event from different perspectives. However, AI attempts to take these data and create a neutral narrative by averaging the reports. This approach may not be effective in Türkiye because the dominant style of news interaction tends to be sensational and attention-grabbing. While AI could provide an advantage in presenting news in a neutral manner, I do not think it will create a habit among people in the short term. Major media organizations need to take steps in this regard, but it seems that they currently do not have such plans. [P11, age 33, Manager (Digital Transformation and Business Transformation)]

Some participants anticipated a gradual reduction in certain desk-based roles within journalism, such as editing and Search Engine Optimization driven content production. However, they emphasized that this shift would not necessarily lead to unemployment. Instead, professionals in these positions must adapt to evolving job requirements and develop new competencies aligned with AI-integrated workflows. One editor-in-chief of a digital newspaper, P26, noted that using *ChatGPT* to create visuals had increased their professional visibility, implying that creative engagement with AI tools can help journalists remain relevant in a changing media environment. Additionally, as noted by all participants, their observations indicated that those who follow technological developments and use technological tools in journalistic practices are consistently one step ahead within media organizations.

Thäsler-Kordonouri (2024) also noted that because human journalists believe that news stories generated by automated journalism, which means stories generated using AI software, lack narrative and editorial quality, these automated outputs are manually edited by human journalists before publication and are called "post-edited" (p.1). In line with this, the findings also show that all participants emphasized their early exposure to AI tools, particularly in the context of news production, and stressed the importance of human involvement in the final stages of news production. Their statements provided a broad understanding of how they have employed GenAI, such as *ChatGPT* and *Midjourney*, for various purposes, including fact-checking and content verification.

> Ultimately, the final touches always need to be made by a human. This is because, in some cases, AI can include information that you have not provided at all. [P23, age 34, Technology Journalist]

> If you are engaged in journalism, you cannot rely on only one source; you need multiple sources. Therefore, it is more about looking at relationships rather than just feelings. If AI provides you with a single source regarding a news item, that information needs to be verified again. [P19, age 31, Web Editor]

The findings reveal that some media organizations in Türkiye have integrated AI tools into their business processes as a strategic initiative. Participant 16, a technology reporter with 6 years of experience, describes his organization's work on AI as follows:

> As a technology journalist at the agency I work for, the fact that we focus solely on technology news is actually an initiative of the institution. The organization is quite eager to keep up with new technologies. How do I know this? Currently, there is an AI advisor who report to the general manager at the agency I work for. In other words, integrating AI into an organization's processes and treating AI as a separate topic in news production is, in fact, a policy of the institution. [P16, age 33, Technology Reporter]

All participants expressed support for the use of GenAI in both universities' journalism curricula and news organizations. They stressed that the training and empowerment of journalists to use GenAI responsibly should go beyond merely teaching simple ethical codes and should focus on fostering an understanding of ethical decision-making processes.

Some journalists believe that AI will not take away their jobs but will rather facilitate their work:

> For instance, in the process of writing news articles, we often spend a significant amount of time on certain aspects. By reducing this time, AI can enable us to focus on producing high-quality work. [P20, age 30, Correspondent & Editor]

Another respondent discussed the potential dangers and benefits of AI. According to P2, including journalism, AI can be used in various fields to verify information accuracy.

> We are talking about a very significant danger and, a great deal of innovation. Every innovation brings risks. In my view, there is no such thing as AI being 100% dangerous or 100% beneficial; it has both harms and benefits. Every medicine, after all, has side effects. However, when we talk about AI, it operates approximately 10 to 100 times faster than humans, if I remember correctly. We are discussing a phenomenon that can accomplish a task that takes me 10 minutes in just 20 seconds. This is applicable not only to journalism but also in scientific discoveries, disease solving, and various other fields. In journalism, he/she can serve as our supervisor, monitoring the news we produce. More advanced AI applications can verify the accuracy of our work, because they involve more sophisticated algorithms and learning capabilities. It can be used in many beneficial ways. Therefore, I don't think it is right to completely ban AI in journalism, even though I haven't used it in quite some time. [P2, age 28, News Anchor]

Some journalists who participated in this study mentioned that AI can be used as a verification tool. For instance, P17 outlined the function of AI in recognizing sources and determining their accuracy as follows:

> It does not really engage with current events, to be honest, because it can provide incorrect information. We have encountered this. Therefore, I need to limit its use. It is more focused on past events. AI serves primarily as a verification tool, recognizing sources and knowing whether they are accurate or not. [P17, age 31, Video Journalist]

These findings underscore the ambivalent role of GenAI in journalism—one that simultaneously promises efficiency and innovation while raising complex questions about editorial integrity, employment practices, and audience engagement. Navigating this terrain requires a systematic reconsideration of how journalism education, institutional policy, and professional ethics can evolve in tandem with technological change.

Discussion and conclusion

This study reveals a central paradox in the impact of GenAI on journalism: while it enhances efficiency, it does not necessarily alleviate journalistic workload. Newman (2024) stated that since the public launch of *ChatGPT* a little over a year ago, newsrooms have begun to see the effects of GenAI in particular. In that survey, AI tools were reported to be used in the newsroom 56% for back-end automation tasks as tagging, transcription, and copyediting, 37% for recommender systems, 28% for human-oversight content production such as assummaries, graphics, video, and 27% for commercial uses. As discussions persist over whether GenAI, even when applied with appropriate human oversight, imposes a "time tax" on financially constrained news media organizations (Attard et al., 2023); this study contributes additional perspectives that resonate with findings from earlier research (Chan-Olmsted, 2019; Cools & Diakopoulos, 2024). While journalists who participated in this study recognized that AI tools enhance efficiency in areas such as information gathering, content creation, and audience engagement, they simultaneously face an increased burden. This arises from the need to verify AI-generated content, which creates a duality in users' experiences. Participants in AI discussions in newsrooms often express appreciation for the ways these tools streamline processes, yet they also highlight the additional effort required to ensure accuracy.

As conversations about the role of GenAI evolve, it becomes clear that these tools can offer valuable support, but they also introduce complexities that journalists must navigate carefully to maintain the integrity of their work. Ethical considerations regarding the use of AI in reporting sensitive issues add another layer of concern to the industry. Journalists emphasize that despite, technological advancements, the irreplaceable human elements of emotion and empathy are essential for meaningful journalism. This finding is supported by Møller et al. (2024), who note that journalists believe that AI cannot replace human qualities such as emotional understanding, empathy, creativity, linguistic finesse, and personal voice, and that this deficiency would render news stories bland and mechanical.

Although there are variations in the practices of using GenAI in news production, all participants agree that the information generated by AI needs to be verified. The solution to misinformation is expressed by Schiller and Brundett (2024) as follows: "But the best way to solve these issues is to engage with the technology and to learn—to be educated advocates, rather than fossilized followers." One of the findings aligns with Beckett's (2024) view that, at present, stories produced without direct human oversight should not be used. Instead, such technologies should be regarded as tools that complement journalistic workflows and business processes. The concerns of Turkish journalists about the potential of AI to undermine verification practices—due to biases and lack of transparency—further complicate its integration into newsrooms. Participants who noted that AI produces ideological texts expressed their reluctance to use GenAI for reporting on sensitive issues such as political issues, femicides, and abuse, as well as local news coverage.

The question of whether GenAI represents a threat or an opportunity for the future of journalism remains unresolved. Chua (2024) similarly noted that numerous obstacles hinder the widespread adoption of news produced using GenAI tools, including concerns about the accuracy of these systems. According to the participants of this study conducted in Türkiye, the integration of GenAI into journalistic practices presents both challenges and opportunities. All participants in this study reported that they have taken various measures to avoid compromising their own credibility as journalists and that of their respective media organizations. They also expressed their ethical concerns regarding GenAI. As GenAI becomes increasingly integrated into journalism, a deeper understanding of its implications is crucial. This calls for a concerted effort within the academic community to explore the complexities of AI in media, ensuring that ethical frameworks are developed and maintained in tandem with technological advancements.

In conclusion, GenAI undoubtedly presents significant opportunities for societies and individuals while also bringing forth a range of challenges. GenAI can substantially enhance productivity in various professions, but such tools also introduce a series of practical, ethical, moral, and policy-related challenges, as stated by the journalists from Türkiye in this study. In particularly, concerns arise from issues such as the reduction in the number of jobs, the dominant circulation of certain ideologies, the recursive reproduction of dominant discourses, copyright debates regarding the generated content, and the lack of ethical codes related to the use of GenAI. Therefore, it is essential to address these concerns in order to maximize the benefits of GenAI while mitigating its potential drawbacks.

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